

# The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, May 28. 1692.



**Quest. 1.** Whether a War be lawful among Christian Princes, since the Doctrine of our Saviour saith, Love your Enemies, and pray for them that despitefully use you.

**Answ.** By our private Capacities we are to Love our Neighbours, to pray for all men, to be pitiful, and love as Brethren, standing in that relation to our Creator, who makes the Sun to shine upon all. We are to bear tolerable injuries, as the despitful usage of a Box or two on the Ear, or a small Loss, and endeavour to be at peace with all men, if possible, and forgive those that Trespass against us, and use all the methods of accommodation to be reconciled to our Enemies. However, these Commands are not Exclusive of the great Command, the Duty of Magistrates, who are to follow the Methods of the Law, to punish Offenders proportionable to their Crimes: And it is not unmerciful to inflict that upon Criminals, either by the Law of Nature, which is the Law of God, or of Man, according to the Nature of the Wrong. Now those Princes who deliver whole Nations from Tyranny and Slavery, the sooner they effect such deliverance, the greater is the Compassion; and such merciful God-like Kings manage their Victories not like the barbarous Lewis the XIV. in his dragooning Conversion, or his Allye in the bloody Jacobite Assizes in the West: But their methods are to settle those Nations they rescue, in such a Condition as the Nature of their wrong requires, that they may be out of danger of Tyranny. That Prince only answers the end of the great Trust reposed in him by God and Man, who preserves his People at home by their Laws, and goes out and fights their Battles abroad.

**Quest. 2.** What sort of Trees were the Trees of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the Tree of Life?

**Answ.** We believe that these Trees were Sacramental, and visible Signs of the Covenant between God and Adam, but not specifically different from other common Trees; as the Water used in Baptism is call'd the Water of Regeneration, yet 'tis like other Water, only different in its ends: Thus one of these Trees was call'd the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, from the Good or Evil depending upon the not eating, or eating of it; the observing or not observing the Commands of God. As for the Tree of Life, 'twas also Sacramental, and a standing Sign of the Covenant on Gods part, that if Adam obey'd he shou'd live forever. We might add, tho' not in the Question, that When 'tis said that Adam was driven out of Paradise, and a Flaming Sword guarded the Tree of Life that he shou'd not eat thereof, it signifies only thus, That Adam was driven away from his pretensions and Clai'm that he had to the Tree of Life whilst Obedient, and because he had broke his part, the Covenant on Gods side was no longer Obligatory; but instead of that some token of his flaming Wrath and Displeasure was exhibited and held forth to guilty Adam. In short, 'Tis easie to prove that all these Texts are not literal, nor that Adam after his Fall was locally expell'd out of any place, or forbid to eat specifically of any Tree, even that which was the Tree of Life, but Sacramentally. 1. Because Adam was not at first forbidden to eat of the Tree of Life, but the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil: So that the Tree of Life was common Food to him before his Fall, we mean as a Tree of Food and Nourishment; now if it had not been Sacramental in the Effect, he had immortaliz'd himself before his Fall. 2. If the Tree of Life had not been really Sacramental, and the Flaming Sword Metaphorical, then it had been the same thing to all Adam's Posterity. We

are all kept from this Tree as Adam was, but 'tis well known there's no such place in the World where there is a Flaming Sword, tho' we are certain we know the very place of Paradise (where Adam liv'd.) We find no mention made of such a Sword or Tree of Life by Adams Children, or any of the Patriarchs before the Flood; nor that Cain after he slew his Brother made any Attempt to participate of the Tree when he fear'd Death from every hand: we cou'd add many more Arguments to this effect, which fully convince us that all these Trees were common Natural Trees, and only Sacramental in their effects, so long as the first Covenant was unbroken, and that afterwards they were the same in every respect, as our ordinary fruit-trees are at this day.

**Quest. 3.** Of what Form was the Serpent in Paradise, and whether such a sort of Creature were not more likely to frighten, than tempt Eve?

**Answ.** To tempt a Woman, it is reasonable to conjecture it had a Mans Face, for there are such Serpents in Madagascar; but there is no necessity to imagine that, or that it had Feet, for by a Motion and Curle of the Tail it might erect it self without Feet, and reach the fruit of the Trees, this Creature being beautiful with a Skin variegated with pretty Colours, also having a Natural Subtilty above the other Creatures, 'twas a proper Instrument for the Devil to make use of, who might very probably tell her thro' its Organs that it had obtain'd the gift of speaking by eating of the forbidden fruit, whereupon Eve might probably believe it might be so; because neither this Creature, nor any other that were named by Adam could speak: and she might farther conclude it must be true, that if this forbidden fruit had the Virtue to endue a Creature with Speech and Reason, it would unquestionably furnish her and her Husband Adam with a superlative reason, even to attain so much Knowledge, as that they both should be as wise as Gods, and upon this presumption she might be perswaded to eat, and draw in her Husband.

**Quest. 4.** Notwithstanding you have convinc'd such as had the Curiosity to examine the Original Copy left at your Booksellers, that the Printer had put in five lines that were scratcht out instead of five others, where a Note of reference was made in the same Paper, that there is yet in those that were last inserted false Latin, Nonsense and a false Quantity in Athos, (you having made the first syllable short) as also two or three more Faults, you'd do well to clear your selves of this second Charge.

**Answ.** As for the Slander of those persons that have endeavour'd to misrepresent us, they have manag'd the Quarrel with so much Malice and Falshood, where they cou'd have no hold of us, that they have so far lost their Reputation, that their Charge against us is rather an Elogy and Commendation, than the contrary: So that we need not be concern'd at any further Attempts against us. Those that have a better Opinion of 'em, will soon see 'em publickly expos'd in such a Dress, that they will also change their Opinions, and be of the Judgment of the sober part of Mankind. As to this last Charge, we shall yet once more clear our selves. Nonsense, false Latin, and two or three more faults, don't at all affect us, by saying that we are guilty of 'em, and not producing the places where; for as we shall never desire 'em to spare us, so 'tis well known that their Malice wou'd have noted the places, if there had been any; a bare peremptory assertion proves nothing where an Enemy speaks, but rather that what he says is false, since he dares not particularize, for fear of being

being found out. As for *a* in *Atheos*, as we said before that it was short, so we yet continue to say so, notwithstanding their Assertion to the contrary, 'tis Originally a Greek Word *ἀθεος*, and every one that knows a little Greek, also knows that *a* in the *Antepenultima* is short before all Consonants : We meet with only two before *theta* in the Greek Tongue that are excepted, viz. *Γαννησ* and *ριζημος*, we shall be oblig'd to any one that can show us any more ; (and here by the by we desire the Reader to read *penultima* instead of *antipenultima* in the Question about *Cleomenes*.) And now let our Adversaries produce their Authorities for *atheos*, where *a* is used long either in Greek or any good Latin Author : And as for the other Charges which came along with this, we hope they'll be so kind to their own Shipwreckt Reputation, as to make 'em out, or own their baseness and disingenuity.

Quest. 5. What's the meaning of the following Verses, they being often us'd by those that set up for the greatest Wits in Town ? 'Tis suppos'd they must be something extraordinary, that the Jest will bear so long ?

— Tacitus pasci si posset *Corvus*, haberet.  
Plus dapis, & rixæ multò minus, invidiæq;

Answ. 'Tis level'd at an honest Bookseller in Town, by the very same Persons that thought to affront him with the Sculpture of a *Raven* and an *Owl*; but as then the Affront retorted upon themselves by the impudent silly Motto they ty'd to it, viz. *Par pari*, Birds of a Feather ; which shows 'em well skill'd in Pairing ; so here for the sake of *Corvus*, which is a little liker to a Raven than an Owl, they have huddled in a Couple of Verses that are as Impertinent as (but much more ridiculous than) *Par pari*. The meaning of the Verses is, That if *Corvus* (the Person represented) would deal under hand with 'em, he should have better Fare, less Scolding and Envy. A little Paraphrase wou'd shew what an unseasable Jest this is : First as to *Plus dapis*, (more Dainties) it as ill comes out of the Mouth of such as receive their daily Bread from *Corvus* and those of his Profession, as any thing in Nature can do ; as for *rixæ*, (Scolding) 'tis one of the Essential Qualifications of these Gentlemen, and 'tis egregiously known under their own hands, that they are great Proficients at it, and by this Insertion 'tis plain they threaten to continue in such a commendable Qualification, without they are Brib'd to the contrary : As to *invidiæ*, (Envy, alias Interloping) that's as foolish as the rest, (tho' Horace they say is their Patron) for why they shou'd Envy such a poor despicable *Corvus*, whose *plus dapis* is dependant (as they have idly inferr'd) upon their disingenuity, is certainly a greater Riddle than a Jest to all Men. This in general from a Character of their own choosing ; as to a more particular Personal one, our Bookseller will speak further amongst his Advertisements.

Quest. 6. Were all those Persons Damn'd, who were burnt in the Conflagration of Sodom, and the adjoining Cities, because St. Jude Epist. v. 7. says, They suffered the Vengeance of Eternal Fire ?

Answ. The Judge of the whole World, shall he not do righteously, or understand as well as a Man? No doubt some good People were drowned in the Deluge, and so might there be some in *Sodom* under the Number of ten, and there is no more Injustice in destroying the righteous or innocent Children, with their Parents, than in inflicting Diseases on them here, &c. to the punishment of their Parents minds in this life. The righteous may share in a common Calamity, and suffer a temporal Death, with and for the sins of the Wicked, who draw down Judgments ; yet if God doth not think fit to seal, and secure them from the outward stroke, as he sometimes doth, yet they are secure as to their better part in another life. Some are perswaded that *Lot* was the only righteous Man in those Cities (meaning Persons at the Years of Discretion) but whether it was so or no, 'tis certain that place suffering the Venge-

ance of Eternal Fire, was really meant by and limited to the Wicked in *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and of such we can't doubt but the Passage is litterally true.

We have in this Paper (according to our Promise) Answer'd all the Questions mention'd in our two last Mercuries, and resolve to continue Answering all Questions whatever, that we may render our Undertaking perfect.

There are certain Memoirs come to our Hands about the Lives of Mr. B. and his Friend, which our next Saturdays Advertisements shall tell the World what Use is design'd to be made of 'em.

The Lady's Questions shall be Answer'd next Tuesday.

This is to give Notice that THE YOUNG STUDENTS LIBRARY will be ready to be deliver'd to the SUBSCRIBERS either Bound or in Quires the 6th Day of next June, and not before.

## BOOKS Newly Published.

The Sixth Volume of the Athenian Mercury is now Publish'd ; Resolving all the most Nice and Curious Questions Proposed by the Ingenious of either Sex, from Saturday, Jan. 30. to Tuesday May 10. 1692. Price 2 s. 6 d. This Sixth Volume is neatly done up in Marble Paper, with a General Title, Preface and Index to it. Printed for John Dunton, at the Raven in the Poultry ; where is to be had the entire Sett of the Athenian Mercuries, (and the Supplements to 'em) for the Year 1691. (or single ones to this time.)

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